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 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Helping Baghdad's youngest residents get well

By Norris Jones
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BAGHDAD, Iraq— Construction continues on renovating the Alwaiya Children's Hospital in east Baghdad. Nearly 100 Iraqi workers are involved with the \$2.9 million project that is expected to be completed in August.

Currently, workers are plastering, installing ceramic wall tiles and terrazzo floors, new ceilings, painting, electrical and putting in heating and air conditioning duct work. Half the 217-bed facility has already been upgraded and is in use. Hospital Administrator, Dr. Tariff Fazil, says his staff sees an average of 350 patients daily and most are cared for as outpatients. About 30 to 35 youngsters are admitted. "We're very pleased with the improvements," he added.

"It touches your heart every time you walk through their door," says Iraqi Engineer Abdul-Kareem, who is employed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) overseeing the work. "It comes down to the basics of humanity and helping save people's lives. Doctors and nurses there are now using equipment that was simply not available two years ago."

The projects include a new water purification system, new mechanical system (both air conditioning and heating), medical waste incinerator, oxygen plant and central vacuum system, nurse call system, intercom paging system, data communications network, new restrooms, new exhaust system to remove unhealthy air and odors, a new generator for emergency power, new lighting, and structural repair

"This hospital takes care of the poorest people in Baghdad. The medical staff had been working in absolute miserable conditions prior to our start of the project. Newborns and young children were dying there every day," said the 33-year-old engineer, who is a lifetime resident of Baghdad. "We've made a difference and I'm



Alwaiya Children's Hospital is being renovated under a \$2.86 million contract – with the work expected to be completed in August. The facility continues to see an average of 350 patients daily despite the ongoing construction. (USACE photo by Norris Jones)



pleased to have been part of it. Alwaiya Children's Hospital is now providing healthcare at the same high standard as private hospitals here. It's great to see these youngsters benefiting from our efforts."

Joe Nolin, Resident Engineer of the USACE International Zone Office, says when he recently visited the project he was amazed at the number of families being helped every day. "Although we have work going on throughout the facility, they've been able to stay open. Obviously, there's a huge need for quality health care in Iraq and it's heart-warming to see the progress going on there. Just the little things we take for granted in the U.S. such as air conditioning and an oxygen plant were unavailable until we stepped in. This is definitely a great story."

Nolin's office is responsible for essential service improvements in half of Baghdad. They currently oversee about 150 projects valued at more than \$500 million, including installing new potable water and sewer networks, paving roads, putting in neighborhood electric distribution networks, rehabilitating water treatment plants, repairing sewer lift stations, constructing public healthcare centers, renovating schools, and rebuilding gas stations.

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